

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00310 111011Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
MCT-01 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 FAA-00
DOTE-00 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 OPR-02 A-01 /099 W
-----111014Z 005956 /20

R 101321Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9373
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMCONSUL IBADEN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0310

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y PARA NUMBERS (8 VICE 10)

ABIDJAN FOR USDAO

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT PFOR MILI DM GV NI GH
SUBJ: BENIN COUP ATTEMPT AFTERMATH

REF: A COTONOU 295 (NOTAL) B COTONOU 276 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GUINEAN TROOPS IN COTONOU. BENINESE PARATROOPER UNIT
INT TROUBLE WITH GPRB. MILITIA UNITS FORMED. OCAM KIGALI
CONFERENCE SUPPORTS BENIN. END SUMMARY

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1. AS GPRB PROPAGANDA MACHINE CHURNS ON (REF A), GPRB
CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A STATE OF PARTIAL PREPAREDNESS. ONE
HUNDRED TO TWO HUNDRED GUINEAN TROOPS WERE AIRLIFTED TO COTONOU
THE WEEK AFTER JAN 16. RARELY SEEN, THEY ARE LODGED IN
PUBLIC BUILDINGS BETWEEN CAMP GUEZO AND THE PRESIDENCY.

2. EMBASSY HAS ALSO RECEIVED REPORT THAT NIGERIAN (AND

POSSIBLY GHANIAN) PATROLCRAFT ARE ANCHORED IN COTONOU PORT.

3. OTHER SECURITY MEASURES HAVE BECOME ROUTINE: ARMED SEARCHES OF COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT AT COTONOU AIRPORT CONTINUED BUT PASSENGERS ARE FIRST ALLOWED TO DISEMBARK. NO OTHER CHANGE IN SECURITY PROCEDURE SITUATION HAS COME TO EMBASSY'S ATTENTION SINCE REF B. TELEPHONES OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, AND SOME OTHER FOREIGNERS REMAIN CUT. EMBASSY FSL INQUIRING AT PTT WAS FIRST TOLD THAT REASON WAS GENERAL BREAKDOWN, THEN TOLD NOT TO COME BACK AS TELEPHONES WOULD REMAIN CUT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

4. BENINESE MILITARY SEEMS TO BE IN A STATE OF FLUX. ELEMENTS OF PARATROOPER COMMANDO COMPANY AND ARMORED UNIT, QUARTERED AT OUIDAH MILITARY CAMP, REACTED SLUGGISHLY TO NEWS OF JAN 16 ATTACK. THAT MORNING ONLY PORTION OF OUIDAH GARRISON MARCHED TOWARD COTONOU AND, FOR SOME REASON, HALTED AND TURNED BACK. SPECULATION IS THAT TROOPS MAY HAVE BEEN HALTED BY OTHER, MORE TRUSTED UNITS OF BENINESE MILITARY OR MAY HAVE SIMPLY RETURNED TO BASE BECAUSE FIGHTING HAD FINISHED.

5. IN ANY CASE, MAJORITY OF PARATROOPERS WERE DISARMED AND TRANSFERRED TO THEIR BASE CAMP AT DAN (NORTH OF BOHICAN IN ZOU PROVINCE) ABOUT 160 KILOMETERS FROM COTONOU. OTHER COMMANDOS WERE ATTACHED TO UNITS IN COTONOU. MAIN BODY IS NOW BACK IN OUIDAH BUT REMAINS DISARMED. RUMOR IS THAT UNIT WILL BE DISBANDED. PARATROOPERS CONSTITUTED MAIN BODY OF TROOPS CAPTAIN JANVIER ASSOGBA MARCHED TO COTONOU
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IN JANUARY 1975 AND WERE LATER COMMANDED BY FORMER MINISTER OF INTERIOR CAPTAIN MICHEL AIKPE, MURDERED BY KEREKOU IN JUNE 1975. ALTHOUGH MOST HIGHLY TRAINED UNIT IN BENINESE ARMY, THEY ARE DEMORALIZED AND DISTRUSTED BY GPRB.

6. PERHAPS AS BALANCE TO DISSIDENT ARMY ELEMENTS, MILITIA UNITS HAVE BEEN FORMED, APPARENTLY ALONG TERRITORIAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE LINES. REPORT HAS REACHED EMBASSY THAT EACH DISTRICT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTING AT LEAST TEN ABLE-BODIED MEN FOR UNIFORMED CIVILIAN DEFENSE FORCE TO BE ARMED AND UNDERGO TRAINING. MILITIA WILL PROBABLY BE USED TO CONTROL CIVILIAN POPULATION AND WILL NOT CONSTITUTE COMBAT FORCE. GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN COTONOU AND IN INTERIOR ARE BEING GUARDED BY ROTATING SHIFTS OF UNARMED WATCHMEN CHOSEN FROM AMONG EMPLOYEES BY CDR (COMMITTEE FOR DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTION).

7. TUESDAY EHUZU (GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER) CARRIED ARTICLE OF OCOM (COMMON ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN AND MALAGASY STATES)

FOREIGN MINISTER CONFERENCE AT KIGALI. SECRETARY GENERAL
SYDNEY MONITA WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT MINISTERS HAD
EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER ATTACK ON BENIN AND THAT THEY WERE
CONVINCED OF TRUTHFULNESS OF GPRB ACCOUNT. GPRB FONMIN
ALLAYDE ATTENDED CONFERENCE. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY
FURTHER INFORMATION KIGALI MAY HAVE RE OCOM PROCEEDINGS.

8. EMBASSY SURMISES THAT MORE POST-COUP DEVELOPMENTS ARE IN
THE OFFING AND WILL ADVISE AS THEY OCCUR.
THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, SECURITY CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977COTONO00310
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770073-0922
Format: TEL
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770255/aaaabwqd.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1b5b74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3357180
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BENIN COUP ATTEMPT AFTERMATH
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, MILI, DM, GV, NI, GH
To: STATE KIGALI
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1b5b74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009